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October 16, 2008

***CARDIN PRESENTS \$75,000 CHECK
TO ANNAPOLIS MARITIME MUSEUM***

ANNAPOLIS, MD – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), today joined with the National Park Service (NPS) in presenting a ceremonial check for \$75,000 to the Annapolis Maritime Museum for creation of the “Oysters on the Half Shell” exhibit. The exhibit will be part of the NPS’s Chesapeake Gateways Network and will highlight both the natural history of the oyster and the cultural history of the people who made their living in the oyster industry.

“I am a strong supporter of the Chesapeake Gateways Network because it is a unique partnership of parks, refuges, museums, historic sites and watertrails spanning the Bay’s watershed,” said **Senator Cardin**. “This funding will help to ensure that Marylanders, and all Americans, have a greater understanding and appreciation of one of the Bay’s most important industries -- the oyster industry.”

“This award to the Annapolis Maritime Museum epitomizes the true benefits realized by the Gateways Network Financial Assistance Program,” said **John Maounis**, Superintendent of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. “Building on previous financial support by the Network, this award will aid the museum in telling the stories of the Chesapeake Bay through hands-on experiences and will strengthen their appreciation for the unique natural ecosystem that is the Chesapeake Bay.”

“A key reason for the Museum’s success has been the nurturing and guidance of the staff at the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. They are truly dedicated individuals who are working hard to build the public’s appreciation of this national treasure in our own back yard. We’re proud to be one of the many Gateways sites and we appreciate Senator Cardin’s support of the Gateways program as well as his support of the Museum,” said **Jeff Holland**, Director of the Annapolis Maritime Museum.

The Annapolis Maritime Museum is currently converting the 7,000 square-foot McNasby Oyster Company building into the Bay Experience Center. The McNasby building was severely damaged during Hurricane Isabel in 2003, and was the last oyster-packing plant in Annapolis and one of the last in the Chesapeake Bay region. Once restored, the McNasby building will provide Annapolis with a state-of-the-art waterfront educational facility, including classrooms, an exhibition gallery and assembly hall that can be used for classes, lectures, and community meetings.

The grant will provide funding for construction drawings, fabrication and installation of the major portion of the exhibit. The restoration of the McNasby building is expected to be completed by December 1.

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